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ABSTRACT

A study examined whether public perceptions of media institutions and products are multidimensional and whether the public's image of media matters. Subjects, 512 randomly selected adult residents of Dane County, Wisconsin, were surveyed by telephone. Results revealed that public perceptions of the media are complex, multifaceted, and include more than a simple assessment of credibility. Six principal categories that can be used in classifying news media images are (1) news information quality, (2) patterning of news, (3) negative aspects of content, (4) dependency and control, (5) special interests, and (6) media as non-essential. Results also suggested that the public's perception of the news would be more positive if the stories were more patterned and meaningful. One method of doing that involves compartmentalizing the arrangement, display, and presentation of the stories that the media already present. Other possibilities include making stories of news events more explicitly connected by including more historical context and presenting advice about where additional information could be found to supplement the news. Once changes were made in those areas, they could be stressed in public information and advertising campaigns. A three-page list of references and eight tables of data conclude the report. (DF)

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PUBLIC IMAGES OF MASS MEDIA NEWS: WHAT ARE THEY AND DOES IT MATTER?

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Public Images of Mass Media News: What are they and does it matter?

Introduction

Public perceptions of mass media currently occupy a prominent place in academic and professional forums. Media industries are spending huge sums of money for large-scale, national (ASNE, 1985; Shaw, 1981, 1985; McGrath and Gaziano, 1986) and community (Whitney, 1985a) studies. The Gannett Center for Media Studies has made "mass media and the public trust" the focal point of its inaugural year (MacNeil, 1985; Whitney, 1985b) and the Times Mirror Co. has recently launched a major advertising campaign sharing the results of its latest national public opinion study of media attitudes. (Gallup Organization, 1986). Furthermore, the American Society of Newspaper Editors recently named press credibility its No. 1 research priority.

Implicit in these concerns is the assumption that how the public regards the media industry and its products is important in pursuing media goals to inform the public, preserve press freedoms, and maintain the economic health of the communications industries. Concern with the public image of media, however, is nothing new. Indeed, studying the public image of the press is an activity almost as old as systematic survey research itself. Erskine (1970a) has reviewed dozens of primarily commercial studies of public perceptions of journalism, radio and newspapers dating back to the early 1930s. Similarly, a variety of questions has also been asked in surveys from time to time regarding such specific topics as freedom of the press (Erskine, 1970b), government information policy and credibility of government news (Erskine, 1971), and the public confidence in institutions generally, including the press (Ladd, 1976). These efforts have been fragmentary, however, and although some of them have been repeated over relatively long periods, they do not add up to a comprehensive picture of the public image of the media. In large part this can be traced to an overly narrow concern with believability. Furthermore, with few exceptions, these efforts do not shed

much light on what effects attitudinal or cognitive assessments have on the use of media or on what is subsequently learned.

One of the earliest academic press attitude studies was conducted in 1933-4 by Thalheimer and Gerberich (1935). The results were treated much like other public opinion polls, as an informal referendum on the practices of the local press and a compendium of generalized impressions of the newspapers available in the area. They concluded that, "to a considerable degree it is the popular belief that the press is venal, biased and inaccurate" (p. 270). Curiously, little attempt was made to try to link these findings to people's use of the papers, nor to try to ascertain the importance of these issues to people. The goal was description.

In a similar vein, commercial pollsters have been asking such descriptive questions since at least the mid-1930s (Erskine, 1970). These studies typically treat the public image of media as something of interest for its own sake, or for the contrast that can be made between media.

Academic interest in this topic has been sporadic, and often heavily administrative in focus, such as the "Image of Paper Z" studies. (See Inland Midwest Universities Committee on Research, 1960, for an example of this genre.) The Inland studies were largely administrative in purpose, focused primarily on believability and on public attitudes toward press practices, and tacitly assumed that somehow these public attitudes matter. However, little attempt was made to empirically document this assumption. Similar academic work of the era concerned itself primarily with the demographic correlates of credibility (Westley and Severin, 1964; Greenberg, 1966).

It has long been recognized that source credibility affects how people react to communication messages, particularly persuasive ones. Hovland and Weiss (1951); Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1957) and others have studied

various aspects of communicator credibility in primarily experimental contexts with attitude change as the criterion variable. The results have generally found support for the notion that perceived credibility of the source does affect message acceptance, at least with strong manipulation of the independent variable. (See Petty and Cacioppo, 1981:59-94; and Hass, 1981; for systematic reviews of these studies.)

Dimensions of affect and knowledge about media

Throughout the media credibility studies there is considerable ambiguity about what is being studied. Whitney (1985b) addressed these concerns primarily by examining the effects of question wording. With few exceptions, however, researchers working in this area have not been precise about conceptualizing what they were studying or trying to create meaningful dimensions of credibility, much less doing so for other potential topic areas. Some researchers set out to study credibility, others bias, trustworthiness, or honesty. Yet others asked questions in all of these areas, and obtained unmanageably large numbers of items and factors (Singletary, 1976).

A fundamental problem lies in specifying what is being studied and adopting appropriate measurement strategies. Too often, measurement is approached by culling items from previous studies, with little apparent concern for how they can be generalized or ordered hierarchically. While many researchers have employed numerous synonyms for credibility in their studies, few have made any attempt to formally dimensionalize these concepts. Exceptions to this are Tannenbaum and McLeod (1963) and Lee (1978), both of whom used the semantic differential to develop dimensions of media images and credibility respectively.

A second problem we note in the literature is the failure to look beyond believability to more comprehensive multidimensional summary evaluations of

media. The mass media, both in their own right and in terms of their interaction with other elements of society, are extraordinarily complex. Media products are highly diverse and can be perceived in numerous ways in addition to simple assessments of their absolute or relative believability. For example, are media products perceived as complete? Are they appropriate to the level of understanding of the audience for which they are intended? Are media seen as powerful shapers of messages and events, as mere conduits of information for powerbrokers, or somewhere in-between?

Some of these questions go well beyond traditional credibility studies. Becker, Whitney and Collins (1980), for example, have noted the lack of research into what the public knows about the media and how they operate. McLeod, Pettey, Kosicki and Tanjong (1985) have also addressed this issue, noting some antecedents and consequences of both knowledge and affective measures.

Finally, we note the surprising lack of systematic focus on what difference all this makes. For example, how do these affective and knowledge-based assessments of media relate to the way people use media, if at all? Are these images related to media reliance, exposure, content use, or attention? Perhaps even more importantly, are they related to what people learn from the media they do use? Some recent work by Iyengar and Kinder (1985), for example, suggests that media credibility is an important intervening variable in agenda-setting.

Toward media images and their effects

The present study focuses on <u>images</u> members of the public have of media. We use the term "image" rather than attitudes, knowledge, or some combination of those terms to signal awareness that public perceptions of media may include both attitudes and knowledge structures. Also, these images can be

conscious or latent and may include not only what is true, but what is assumed to be true by the respondent.

The ambiguity of previous findings and directions made it difficult to begin this research with a clear idea of what image dimensions might emerge. As a result, we were unable to state specific hypotheses about what factors might be associated with what particular media use patterns and with what levels of knowledge. Nonetheless, we did anticipate a number of findings prior to our analyses. We did expect that factor analyses would indicate that media images are indeed multidimensional. Perhaps our strategy of including items reflecting as many potential dimensions as feasible made this result inevitable. We also thought that the dimensions might divide first into three clusters representing content, journalistic performance and the function of media institutions. We felt the content cluster might further break down into accuracy and completeness.

In terms of what difference the factors might make, we felt that credibility might be important but that other dimensions might play at least as strong a role. Particularly in terms of what people might learn from news, items reflecting the institutional functions might be particularly important. We will discuss the extent to which these rough hypotheses worked out in our conclusions after presenting the research results.

Methods

Measurement: Media Images

With regard to the broad topic of media images, three basic content domains were identified: those of media content, the media as an institution, and the role of journalists in the newsgathering process. Within this framework, ten possible dimensions were identified and items constructed with a view to obtaining both positive- and negative-facing questions oriented to each dimension.

Although the wording of the bulk of the media image items was original, previous discussions in the literature informed question wording. In addition to the sources cited in the preceding section, the media theories of Noelle-Neumann (Noelle-Neumann, 1983) and De Fleur (De Fleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1982) were drawn on in developing items relating to news consonance and dependency respectively.

Nineteen items ultimately were used to measure media image, each constructed in terms of a five-point Likert scale. The items were placed in three different sections within the questionnaire. The first 15 items pertained to the news media in general, while the last four were asked of television and newspapers separately. These latter questions were collapsed into global items for analysis here. The items included:

1. The news media exercise too much control over the information available to us.
2. The news media provide a service essential to democracy.
3. The news media often pursue their own interests rather than acting in the public interest.
4. Many important news stories are never carried in the news media.
5. Most reporters apply high ethical standards to their work.
6. The various news media all seem to be saying pretty much the same thing.
7. There are many other ways to find out what's going on in the world other than by using the mass media.
8. News is mostly a series of unconnected events that don't add up to much.
9. If you use a variety of news sources, you can really get a diversity of points of view.
10. People are so dependent on the mass media that they don't have any independent check of what's really going on.
11. Individual news items may seem fragmentary, but in the long run the news forms a meaningful pattern.
12. The media focus too much on bad news.
13. Many stories in the media reflect the biases of the people who produce them.
14. Reporters often exaggerate and sensationalize just to sell newspapers or improve ratings.
15. Editorials in the media usually represent well-thought-out positions in the public interest.
16. The information contained in newspaper/television news stories is thorough and complete.
17. Newspaper/television news stories present an accurate picture of the things they cover.
18. Newspapers/television often act as spokesmen for special interests.
19. Newspaper/television news is upbeat and optimistic about the world.

Measurement: Political and Current Events Knowledge

Political knowledge was measured using a set of eight standard filter and contingency questions tapping knowledge of the local U.S. representative and senators, their party affiliations and length of congressional terms.

Current events knowledge was measured using four items asking respondents to identify topics recently covered in the news. The items consisted of the following:

1. For some time the Russians have been urging the United States to give up a new defense program as part of the negotiations for nuclear arms reductions. What is the program the Russians are asking us to give up? (Star Wars or Strategic Defense Initiative)
2. South Africa has been in the news lately because of the violence directed against the government's policy of racial segregation. What is the term used to define this policy of racial segregation? (Apartheid)
3. Larry Speakes is a name frequently heard in the news. Can you tell me what his job is? (White House Press Secretary or Spokesman)
4. AIDS has been making headlines both here and abroad as scientists work to combat this usually fatal disease. Can you tell me what the initials A.I.D.S. stand for? (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

Each set of items was combined to form indices of political and current events knowledge respectively. Alpha levels were measured at .82 and .69 respectively.

Measurement: Evaluation of media

Evaluation of media performance was ascertained by asking people to rate how well newspapers and national TV news perform the following functions of journalism (Ryan and Tankard, 1977).

1. Giving people a daily account of what's happening in the world.
2. Informing citizens about politics so they can vote intelligently in elections.
3. Providing a forum for a wide range of viewpoints on important issues.
4. Serving as a watchdog on government and politicians.
5. Giving citizens practical information they can use in their daily lives.
6. Providing a way for people who no longer go to school to keep up with new ideas.

Respondents were asked to respond EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR or POOR, separately for both newspapers and national TV news. Cronbach's alphas for the newspaper and television indices are .78 and .80 respectively.

Measurement: Political Efficacy and Trust

Political efficacy and political trust were each measured by a standard set of four Likert-scale items (Robinson, Rusk and Head, 1968). The political trust items were:

1. Most of our leaders are devoted to the service of their country.
2. Politicians never tell us what they really think.
3. To succeed in American politics, a politician does NOT have to give up his or her principles.
4. Most politicians are more interested in getting re-elected than in solving the nation's problems.

The efficacy items were:

1. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.
2. Every vote counts in an election including yours and mine.
3. I don't think public officials care about what people like me think.
4. The way people vote is the main thing that decides how things are run in this country.

The indices formed from these items had alpha levels of .60 and .35 respectively.

Measurement: Exposure to Public Affairs Content

Six items were used to measure exposure to public affairs content. All items were measured on a four-point rating scale. Three items were specific to television public affairs content and three to newspaper public affairs content. The television items included:

How frequently do you watch the following kinds of television programs? Would you say you watch these programs FREQUENTLY, SOMETIMES, RARELY or NEVER?

1. National news
2. Local news
3. News magazines and interviews.

The newspaper items included:

How often do you read in your daily newspaper the following kinds of stories? Tell me whether you read these stories FREQUENTLY, SOMETIMES, RARELY or NEVER?

1. International affairs
2. National government and politics
3. Local government and politics

Two indices were constructed from these items, for television and newspaper public affairs exposure, respectively. The alpha levels for these indices were .74 and .87 respectively.

Measurement: Attention to Public Affairs Content

Four items were used to measure the amount of attention paid to television and newspaper public affairs content. The television items included:

When you are watching television programs and the following kinds of stories appear, how much attention do you pay to them? Would you say you pay CLOSE ATTENTION, SOME ATTENTION, or LITTLE ATTENTION to stories about:

1. National government and politics
2. Local government and politics

Similarly, the newspaper items were the following:

When you read the following kinds of newspaper stories, how much attention do you pay to them? Would you say that you pay CLOSE ATTENTION, SOME ATTENTION, or LITTLE ATTENTION to stories about:

1. National government and politics
2. Local government and politics

Alpha levels for the two indices of Attention to Television and to Newspaper Public Affairs Content were .75 and .73 respectively.

Measurement: Exposure to Non-Public Affairs Content

Six items were used to measure exposure to non-public affairs content. All items employed a four-point rating scale. Three items concerned television entertainment and three concerned newspaper soft-news content.

The television items included:

How often do you watch the following kinds of television programs? Would you say you watch these programs FREQUENTLY, SOMETIMES, RARELY or NEVER?

1. Situation comedies
2. Crime and adventure
3. TV movies and miniseries

The newspaper items included:

How often do you read in your daily newspaper the following kinds of stories? Tell me whether you read these stories FREQUENTLY, SOMETIMES, RARELY or NEVER?

1. Crime and accident stories
2. Stories about entertainment and sports personalities
3. Features about ordinary people

Each group of three items was combined into indices of exposure to television and newspaper entertainment content respectively, with alpha levels of .62 and .68.

Measurement: Media Reliance

Respondents were asked to rank six information sources in terms of which they relied upon most for information about current events and political affairs. The six sources listed were: newspaper, family and friends, television, magazines, radio, and other. Those respondents were classified as reliant upon a particular medium who selected that medium as their first-ranked item.

Measurement: Demographic Antecedents

Four demographic antecedent variables were selected as controls in the present study: age of respondent; gender; education, in terms of years of schooling completed; and income, measured as total household income from all sources.

Sampling

The sample consists of 512 adult residents of Dane County, Wisconsin, who responded to telephone interviews conducted in late October 1985. The sample was drawn by random digit dialing procedures with selection from each of 36 telephone exchanges proportionate to the number of private telephone lines. Interviewing was conducted by trained graduate students and advanced undergraduates as part of a Communication Research Methods course. Interviews were authenticated by call-backs in all cases.

Because Dane County includes the state capital, Madison, and the university, the sample was relatively young and well-educated. The median

age of our sample was 36, about five years younger than that of the U.S. adult population; 39 percent had completed college, in contrast to only 17 percent for the nation in the 1980 Census.

RESULTS

Dimensionality of Media Images

Our first research question was: to what extent do the public images of the news media form meaningful dimensions? Are the various perceptions subsumable under a single dimension of credibility, or do all the dozen or so terms associated with perceptions of media form separate dimensions, or does the empirical reality of media images fall somewhere in between?

The 19 Media Image Likert-scale items provided the evidence for answering the question. Although four of the 19 items had to be asked separately for newspapers and television news, answers to the corresponding items showed a strong association between the two media (averaging +.57). This allowed us to combine the scores across newspaper and television news for items 16 through 19.

It is apparent from Table 1 that news media images are indeed multidimensional. A factor analysis of the 19 items using a principal components solution with varimax rotation revealed six factors with Eigen values over the 1.0 criterion. Other solutions and oblique rotation produced comparable results. The six factors account for 52 percent of the total variance.

The first and strongest factor, <u>News Information Quality</u> (accounting for 17.7% of the total variance, 3.37 Eigen value) seems the factor most closely related to the traditional media concept of credibility. The two highest loadings are shown for items strongly identified with credibility, accuracy (.73) and completeness (.71). Also loading on the first factor are items involving the quality of editorials (.58) and the ethical standards of journalists (.45).

In terms of approval of news quality, the public gives a rather favorable to mixed review. Ratings of reporters' ethics were considerably above average (3.59) and approval of editorials and perceptions of accuracy were more likely to be favorable than unfavorable (3.39 and 3.35 respectively). However, the respondents were as likely to disagree as to agree that the information is thorough and complete (3.08).

Patterning of News, the second factor (9.1% of total variance, 1.73 Eigen value) presents a sharp contrast to the news content focus of the first factor. The items here deal with the perception of news as forming a meaningful pattern and the role of that pattern in the democratic process. The factor relates more to institutional aspects of the media and less to specific judgments about media content and journalistic performance. The diversity of views and meaning patterns produced by news and its essential democratic service provide the strongest loadings (.72, .60, .58). A negative item, news as consisting of unconnected events, has a modest loading (-.46) as does high ethical standards of journalists (.44), which also loaded on the first factor.

Strong endorsements of the patterning of news is shown on all five items loaded on the second factor. The means for the four positive items range from 3.59 to 4.06 and the negative item, news as unconnected events, shows strong rejection.

The third factor, Negative Aspects of Content, superficially viewed seems to be a mirror image of the first factor in capturing four negative statements about media content and journalistic performance (7.6% of total variance, 1.45 Eigen value). There is a difference, however, in that the items tend to deal less with content per se and more with its stylistic

aspects--dullness, sensationalism, bad news. Those aspects, along with the statement that stories reflect reporters' biases, all have strong loadings ranging from .72 to .53.

The sample tended to agree that the media focus on bad news too much (3.35) and more often than not agreed that reporters exaggerate (3.29) and inject bias (3.27). They are evenly divided as to whether there are many dull and unexciting stories.

Three items form the fourth factor, Dependency and Control (6.4% of total variance, 1.22 Eigen value). The public agrees that there is lack of an independent check leading to media dependency, (3.26) and that the media exercise too much control over information flow (3.50). They also tend to agree in the consonance of news in that the media seem to be saying pretty much the same thing (3.44).

The perception that the media often act as spokesmen for special interests is the dominant loading (.73) on the fifth factor, Special Interests (5.9% of total variance, 1.21 Eigen value). Lesser loadings are shown for the media serving their own rather than the public's interest (.46), the news media exercising too much control (.42) and the news media serving democracy (-.39). The last two items loaded more distinctly on the fourth and second factor, respectively. The respondents tended to agree that the media do serve special interests (3.35) and to a lesser extent perceived them as serving their own interest (3.15).

The final factor, Media as Non-Essential, is more difficult to interpret (5.5% of total variance, 1.05 Eigen value). The statement that there are ways other than the mass media to find out what going on has the highest loading (.79) with the assertion that many stories are never covered and that news is mostly unconnected events showing lesser loadings (.49 and .45). Our

respondents tended to reject both the possibility of alternative sources (2.71) and unconnected events (2.26) and divided on whether many stories are missing (3.10). The unclear conceptual basis of this factor and its marginal Eigen value led us to drop the sixth factor in further analyses of media image factors.

-- Table 1 about here --

Control Variables and Image Factors

To control for spuriousness in the relationship of our media image factors with the various dependent variables, we used four demographic variables known to be connected with patterns of media use: gender, age, income and education. For analyses of political and current events knowledge, we added as controls two political attitude variables, efficacy and trust, that are likely to be linked to higher levels of political knowledge.

It is also reasonable to expect that the four demographic and two political variables might be associated with our media image dimensions. This possibility is examined in Table 2. Men tend to see the news as more patterned but also are more likely than women to agree with statements citing various negative stylistic aspects of news. Age is not strongly associated with the media image factors, although there is a marginal tendency for the older respondents to see the news media as exercising too much control over information. Higher levels of both income and education are associated with seeing news as patterned and the more educated persons are <u>less</u> likely to view the media as serving special interests and controlling news. At the same time, the more highly educated are <u>less</u> likely than others to give high ratings to the quality of news in terms of accuracy and completeness.

Stronger and more consistent relationships are shown between the two political variables and the five image variables (Table 2). Those rated

as politically efficacious and trusting in the political system give higher ratings to news information quality and see a patterning to the news. They also tend to be less negative about the stylistic aspects of content, to see the media as less controlling, and to reject assertions about the media serving special interests. The results argue for the importance of controlling for these political variables in our later analyses. The inconsistent and modest level of demographic relationships with the media image factors, on the other hand, suggest that media images are not simply derivative from social structural location.

-- Table 2 about here --

Image Factors and Media Use

The most direct way in which media images might make a difference is in their potential connection to media use. The simplest connection would be one to affect the time allocated to media consumption. Those holding the most positive images of media news could be expected to spend more time with the news media. Those possibilities are examined with respect the number of days per week the respondent spent reading newspapers and the time spent with television generally.

Hierarchical regression was used entering the four demographic variables as the first block. In keeping with much previous research, older people and those with higher income and more education tend to read newspapers more often (Table 3). The block of demographic variables accounts for a significant amount of newspaper variance (10.5%).

More important to our interests here is the finding that the block of five media image variables does contribute significantly to accounting for an additional amount of variance (3.2%). Those giving higher ratings to the

quality of news and seeing a pattern in news tend to read newspapers more frequently.

Time spent with television represents a somewhat non-comparable measure in that its major component is likely to be entertainment per se rather than news. This is reflected in the significant negative beta coefficients shown for both income and education. Older respondents also tend to spend more time with television. The Media Image block does not predict television time, although it is notable that those giving higher ratings to the quality of news do spend somewhat more time with television (.09 final beta in Table 3).

-- Table 3 about here --

Image Factors and Media Reliance

We might also expect that the images of news media would affect the choice of sources for news, exemplified here by the reliance rankings given these various sources. Demographics are likely to be associated with reliance and, thus, we need to look at the influence of image factors after effects of these demographics have been controlled. Demographics do influence reliance with older respondents relying more on newspapers and newsmagazines and less on family and friends (Table 4). Income predicts to higher reliance on newspapers while education is associated with higher rankings for the two print media and with lower reliance on both television and friends and family.

The block of media image variables accounts for significant increments of variance in the analyses of newspaper, newsmagazines and friends and family, but not in television reliance. The various image factors show distinctly different patterns of relationship. News information quality predicts to higher rankings of both television and newspapers and to lower reliance on personal sources. Patterning of news is related to higher reliance on both newspapers and magazines and to lower dependence on friends

and family. The first factor, then, is associated with reliance on the dominant news sources while the second is tied to print reliance.

Only one significant reliance relationship is found among the last three image factors. Those seeing the news media as representing special interests tend to rely less on newsmagazines.

-- Table 4 about here --

Image Factors and Content Use

It seems logical to expect that those holding more favorable images of media news would use the news content of those media more frequently. As seen in the first two comparisons in Table 5, the five image factors do account for significant portions of the incremental variance in the use of both newspaper and television public affairs content. But only patterning of news is associated with reading political news in the press. Those seeing a pattern to news read political and governmental news more often. The reverse causal possibility, that more frequent exposure to hard news leads people to perceiving that it forms a pattern, is also possible--an inference that we will deal with in the conclusions.

Perceiving that the news is accurate and complete is significantly associated with watching more news on television. The coefficient for the first factor and newspaper public affairs is also positive, but it fails to reach statistically significant levels (.08 final beta). Perceiving the news as high in quality does predict (.19 beta) to the reading of soft news--crime and accident stories, stories about personalities, and features about ordinary people, and to television entertainment content (.10 beta). The factor containing credibility then predicts well to everything but the reading of hard news.

The last three factors again fail to demonstrate significant relationships except for the more frequent reading of soft news by those seeing media content as representing special interests.

All of these image factor relationships represented by the significant final betas should be understood as holding after controlling for the effects of the demographic variables and the other image factors. All four demographic variables predict newspaper public affairs use, but none of them is related to soft news reading. Older people view television news more but entertainment content less. As expected, entertainment fare is less frequently used by the more educated respondents.

-- Table 5 about here --

Image Factors and Attention to Public Affairs

Beyond exposure to public affairs content, the attention paid to such material may have important main effects and interactions with respect to learning from news content (McLeod and McDonald, 1985). The prediction of attention to public affairs content is displayed in Table 6. Partly as a function of the rather high correlation between exposure and attention to public affairs in the newspaper, the results shown in the newspaper column are very similar to those shown in Table 5. Only the perception that news is patterned is related to attention, as are all four demographic variables.

The results for attention to public affairs television news are rather different than shown in Table 5 for exposure. In contrast, it is patterning of news that predicts to attention to television news while it was the quality of news that was associated with exposure to it. Age and gender also predict television attention but not exposure. It may be noted that public affairs exposure and attention are not so strongly related for television as they are for newspapers and that previous work on attention finds stronger interactive

effects for television news than for newspapers (McLeod and McDonald, 1985; Chaffee and Schleuder, 1986).

-- Table 6 about here --

Image Factors and News Evaluation

It is reasonable to expect that people who have favorable media news images would be more likely than others to think that the media are performing their functions well. The evaluation of performance in each of six areas was ascertained separately for newspapers and for television news. A correlation of .60 between the evaluation indices of the two media justified their combination in the first analysis in Table 7. In terms of demographics, what is most noteworthjy is the weakness of the connection to the combined evaluation (2.2%). Only older women seem to give distinctively high ratings.

Given the close conceptual correspondence between images and evaluation--perhaps a kind of means-ends relationship is involved--it is less important to note the very strong relationship of the block of image variables to evaluation (22.2% of the variance) than it is to analyze which factors contribute most to the overall evaluation. The first factor is the strongest predictor (.37 final beta), albeit it also has the highest Eigen value in the factor analysis. Patterning of news is also strong (.22 beta) and the third and fourth factors are also independently related to evaluation in the consistent direction (both have -.14 betas). Only the fifth factor fails to produce a significant association.

Although the two measures of news performance evaluation are strongly related, it may be helpful to analyze the medium-specific evaluation of each by controlling for the variance accounted for by the other medium. To do this, television news evaluation was introduced as the first control variable in the analysis of newspaper news and vice-versa.

News quality image factor scores are positively related to the specific evaluation of both media although the strength of the relationship is markedly diminished by the controls. Patterning of news is more revealing in that it is strongly related to the evaluation of newspaper news both before and after controls, but its tie to television news evaluation is quite different. At the zero-order it reveals a non-signficant positive association that becomes a significantly negative one after controls are introduced. Those seeing a pattern in the news give positive evaluations to newspaper news specifically but negative ones to television news after their ratings of newspapers are considered.

The third and fourth factors show negative coefficients with respect to both media at the zero-order level, but only the relatively low ratings of performance given television news by those with negative reactions to the stylistic aspects of media content remain statistically significant after control. The final factor shows a significant relationship to specific newspaper evaluation only after control. Those seeing the media as favoring special interests rate newspaper performance lower than do other people.

Among the demographics, the more educated respondents give stronger evaluations to newspapers and weaker ones to television news. Older persons and women give more favorable evaluations to television than do others, but these variables do not affect newspaper ratings.

-- Table 7 about here --

Image Factors and Knowledge

The question of whether the media image factors are related to political and current events knowledge is perhaps the most stringent test of their power. Further, we provided a most conservative test for the image factors by introducing as previous control blocks the four demographic variables, two

political attitude variables, and two media measures that combined public affairs exposure and attention. The media image factors were introduced as the fourth block in an hierarchical regression analysis. The interaction of the five image factors with the two public affairs indices was entered as the final block.

Both forms of knowledge were strongly predicted by the four demographic variables (17.4% and 23.1% of the variances in Table 8). More highly educated men are more knowledgeable on both knowledge measures. Income predicts to political knowledge but not to current events knowledge. Interestingly, older respondents know more about political matters such as the names and political parties of office holders while younger people are more knowledgeable about current events.

Despite their prominence in the political science literature, the two political variables add little to the understanding of either form of knowledge (0.8% and 0.9%). Political efficacy is related to each at the zero-order level, but the demographic controls reduce it to below significance levels in the case of political knowledge. The more politically efficacious persons are more aware of current events even after controls. Political trust is related to political knowledge before but not after controls. Trust actually becomes negatively related to current events knowledge after all other variables are controlled.

-- Table 8 about here --

The combined use and attention to public affairs measures do contribute significant increments to the prediction of both forms of knowledge (4.5% in each case). Newspaper use and attention account for virtually all of this contribution, however. It is the strongest single beta among the 13 main effect variables in both instances (.24). Television news use and attention

is significant before controls for political knowledge, but reduces to almost zero (.03) in both analyses.

Most germane to our analysis is the finding that the media image block produces significant increments to the variance accounted for in both types of knowledge. Although the proportions are not large (3.3% and 3.9%), they do survive at the .001 level after eight other key variables have been controlled.

Favorable media images could be expected to enhance learning from mass media news. The prediction for our media image factors, therefore, would be for the first two factors to show positive relationships and for the final three to have negative ones. As we will see, things didn't work out quite as neatly as that.

News information quality, the first factor containing traditional conceptions of credibility, reveals a negative relationship to knowledge that is statistically significant in the current events comparison. That is, the more highly persons evaluate the quality of the information contained in the news the less they know about current events (-.09 in Table 8). These counter-intuitive findings for the first image factor require closer examination.

Our difficulty with accepting the assertion that people who were very negative about the quality of news information would be highly knowledgeable led to an examination of the possibility that the relationship would be curvilinear. To test this possibility, we divided the distribution of each factor score into quintiles and tested for trends via orthogonal polynomial analysis. Although the analysis failed to produce significance for the first factor beyond a linear model, the second-order quadratic was close to significant levels. The plot of the distribution of the news quality image factor on the standard scores of current events knowledge is shown in Figure 1. The most negative perceptions of quality (group 1) are not particularly

high on knowledge; what is most salient is the drop-off in knowledge among those giving very high ratings to news quality (groups 4 and 5). The general shape of the curve is similar for political knowledge.

-- Figure 1 about here --

Patterning of news shows a strong relationship to both forms of knowledge in the predicted direction before and after controls (Table 8). The more people see that the news is cumulative and patterned, the more knowledge they have even after their demographics, political attitudes and public affairs media use is controlled. The relationship of the news patterning factor is linear, a finding that is clearly demonstrated in Figure 1.

Negative aspects of news, the third media image factor, is significantly and positively related to information holding about current events (Table 8). That is, those most critical of the dullness, sensationalism and the bad news of media are more knowledgeable about recent events. The plot of the third factor on current events knowledge reveals an essentially linear relationship.

The fourth factor, dependency and control, shows no relationship to either type of knowledge. Special interests, the fifth factor, does show a significant negative relationship with both knowledge measures. Those believing that the media reflect special interests have lower political and current events knowledge than do others. The plot of this factor on current events knowledge is also shown in Figure 1. Polynomial analysis shows a clear linear fit, although there is tendency for the most extremely critical respondents (group 5) to be not as bereft of knowledge as is the fourth group.

The 10 interaction terms generated by multiplying the standard scores of the two use and attention to public affairs measures by the five media

image factor scores form a block that adds a significant increment of variance in the analysis of political knowledge (2.1%). Although it is hazardous to interpret such interactions, we can make some tentative inferences: the negative relationship between news information quality (factor 1) and knowledge is stronger the more television is used and attended to; the positive relationship between stylistic criticism of content (factor 3) and knowledge is stronger among the low television users; a positive relationship between dependency and control (factor 4) and knowledge is found for those using television more and newspapers less; and the negative relationship between special interests (factor 5) and knowledge is stronger the more newspapers are used. These raise interesting possibilities for further analysis, but should not be over-interpreted at this point.

Conclusions

This study has had two main objectives: to determine whether public perceptions of media institutions and products are multidimensional in developing a set of media images, and to test some ways that these images matter. After finding evidence of multidimensionality, our strategy was to develop a relatively small set of abstract summary images of media and study their consequences intensively as both main effects and interactions. To do this we selected a variety of criterion concepts, including media use, media evaluation and learning of political and current events information.

Concerning media images themselves, the evidence is clear. Public perceptions of media are complex, multifaceted and include much more than simple assessments of credibility. The data support the inference that public images of media can be meaningfully organized along a relatively small set of independent dimensions. Furthermore, these images are readily interpretable and seem related in sensible but nonobvious ways to potentially important criterion variables.

The images are combinations of factual statements and attitudinal summaries. Dimensionality was, of course, built into the questionnaire by our choice of items. We believe the resulting image factors represent hypothetical unmeasured, complex constructs that can be improved through more attention to formal explication and measurement. Accordingly, because the underlying unmeasured images are likely more complex than we have measured, we caution against the overinterpretation of the resulting factors in terms of their original items. For future research we recommend that additional items be developed consistent with the interpretations offered here.

That the traditional concept of credibility is most closely related to the factor with the largest eigen value should not be emphasized too much. Factor solutions are inevitably results of what is selected for input. The eigen values associated with the factors represent the statistical importance of the factors in their ability to adequately replace the specific set of input variables with a more parsimonious set of constructs. For example, the strong showing of Factor V, special interests, suggests that even relatively weak factors can have important outcomes.

One of the persistent questions about the image factors relates to their conceptual status. We think they represent constructs that will ultimately prove more useful to researchers and media managers than simple assessments of credibility and its many synonyms. The past research focus on credibility may perhaps be understandable given four decades of accumulated experimental evidence. However, the relevance of such non-subtle findings as that the New York Times is more persuasive than Pravda is questionable.

The current preoccupation with the relative credibility of newspapers versus television may be like asking the hypothetical question, "Which do you believe most -- the picture (television) or its caption (newspapers)." Researchers may be drawn to this kind of question for a variety of historical

and administrative reasons, but our data suggest people see many shades and patterns of gray between those black and white extremes. People may not deal with these questions directly or think about them often, if ever. But it is inescapable that people interact with media based on some implicit assumptions about their origins, purposes, motives and other characteristics.

So far we have said little about the antecedents of our image factors, and we expect an examination of them in a subsequent report will help interpret them.

Do Images Matter?

For the second research question, whether news media images really matter, the evidence provided an affirmative answer that requires a more complex explanation. Overall, the image factors were found to be related to six criteria of media use, media evaluation and knowledge. Across the 17 main effect comparisons found in Tables 3 to 8, the block of five image factors added significant increments of variances in 13 or about 77% of the tests. The newspaper variables were better predicted by the image factors than were the television measures adding an average of 4.8% to the variance accounted for in newspaper variable contrasted to only 2.1% for the television measures. Of the 85 tests of final beta coefficients of the five individual image factors, 33 or about 39% were statistically significant.

Some words of caution are needed. We should acknowledge that the influence of the media image factors was not large, averaging 4.0% compared with 6.1% for the demographic variables. It should be remembered, however, that in the hierarchical regression analyses, the media image variables were added after the four demographic variables. The image factors operated rather independently from the demographic variables and in the analyses of knowledge levels contributed beyond political trust and efficacy and public affairs

media use variables as well. It is also possible that the direction of causation is the reverse of the order specified here. That is, that media use and learning from media shape the images that people have of the news media. Then too, it is obvious that the five factors are unevenly related to the other media and knowledge variables. The first two image factors provide 73% of the significant relationships. These problems are best treated in discussion of the individual factors.

News information quality proved to be the strongest and perhaps the most interesting if also the most daunting of the five media image factors. Because it is also the closest to the much-studied concept of credibility in subsuming accuracy and completeness, we should closely examine its adequacy as a synonym for the broader conception of public perceptions of the news media.

The common wisdom suggests that the more highly the person rates the quality of news information, the more he/she will pay attention to and use the news media content and learn from it. In terms of relying on newspapers and television as sources of news and in spending time with those media, this expectation was upheld. Positive evaluations of news quality also predicted to reading soft news but not hard news in the newspaper and to watching news on television but also to viewing entertainment programming. It was not associated with paying attention to public affairs content in either medium, however.

The most striking finding for the news quality factor, however, was clearly contrary to the common wisdom. Those giving the most favorable ratings to the quality of news were less informed about current events than were those less sanguine about accuracy and completeness. This tended to hold for political knowledge as well, but not at statistically significant levels. The negative relationship was further complicated by the finding that it tended to be curvilinear with rather evenly high levels at the first three

quintiles followed by a sharp drop in knowledge at the upper more favorable ends of the distribution.

How can we summarize these relationships of news quality to media use? One interpretation is that those rating news quality most highly are esssentially "fans" of the dominant media and are complacent to the extent that they see little need to seek further information or to heavily process the news they are exposed to. At worst, they may process hard news in a manner similar to the way they consume soft news in the paper and entertainment on television, thus retaining little information.

A quite different interpretation results if we make an opposite assumption about the causal ordering. If media images follow rather than precede media use and knowledge, then positive feelings about news information quality might result from repeated exposure to the media including its entertainment as well as its public affairs content. Apart from such exposure to media, the better informed, more interested and better educated respondents would realize how much there is to know and how difficult accurate reporting is. They would value and use media news but be somewhat skeptical about its quality. Either of these causal interpretations is possible as is the likelihood of reciprocal causation. Analyses not yet completed appear to favór the first over the second if we must choose between them.

Patterning of news, the second most salient factor, generated as many significant relationships as did news quality but its findings are considerably less complicated. The expectation that those seeing a cumulative pattern to the news and valuing the media as essential to democracy should use hard news more and get more from it was strongly upheld. High pattern respondents read newspapers more often and used and paid more attention to public affairs content than did others. They relied on print media more and evaluated the role performance of newspapers highly. Beyond their advantaged demographic background, their favorable attitudes toward the political system,

and their attentive use of public affairs material, those seeing a pattern to news were highly knowledgeable about political matters and current events.

The opposite causal sequence would assert that, with more exposure to public affairs news and with accumulating knowledge, people generate an image of the news as patterned and as serving democratic goals. This is certainly plausible as is reciprocal causation; none of these possibilities diminishes the importance of the patterned image dimension.

Negative aspects of news content, the third factor, may be regarded as something of a disappointment in its failure to demonstrate evidence that it makes a difference in its effects. Agreement with various flawed aspects of content--dullness, sensationalism, bad news, and reporters' bias--was distinctive only in being related to lower evaluations of the performance of the news media and, surprisingly, to higher levels of current events knowledge. Apparently these negative stylistic feelings did little to affect media use and may have enhanced learning from media by facilitating information storage after processing. Alternatively, knowing more about current events may have induced audience members to notice stylistic flaws in the news content. Perhaps the lack of association is the most important finding for this factor, given the concern the media have about complaints about bad news and the like.

Dependency and control, the fourth factor, was also notable in the absence of connection to either media use or knowledge. Only in the low evaluations given media performance did this factor emerge as statistically significant. This lack of predictive power may reflect, in part, the lack of strong measurement of the underlying construct. It is true too that the inference of weak effects is limited to the dependent variables considered here. On some as yet incomplete analyses with other variables in the same data set, we are finding that both this dependency factor and the third stylistic factor are demonstrating relatively strong connections with

information processing variables. These processing variables in turn are related to effects considered here. Perhaps the major impact of the third and fourth media variables are indirect rather than direct.

Special interests, the fifth and weakest factor to be considered in our analyses, did develop some distinctive relationships to media use that seem consistent and coherent. Those seeing the media as reflecting special interests tend to focus on soft news (crime, entertainment, features) in their use of newspapers, to not rely on newsmagazines, and give relatively low evaluations of newspaper performance. Given their choice of content, it is not surprising that those perceiving special interests are low on both political and current events knowledge. From the alternative causal sequence, less knowledgeable people and those avoiding hard news could rationalize their ignorance by attributing partisan pleading to complicated hard news.

Practical Implications

From an administrative point of view, our findings present some good news and some bad news. The good news is that the topic that has dominated the administrative research agenda, media credibility, has emerged as part of a strong first factor and that this factor is related to spending more time with both newspapers and television and to evaluating their performance highly. The bad news for newspaper strategists is that the "credibility" dimension is related to soft news reading but not to reading of public affairs content or to paying attention to it. Even more damaging is the finding that highly "credible" judgments are associated with lower levels of knowledge. More bad news yet is the finding that positive perceptions of news style is also related to lower current events knowledge. Patterning of news, a perception not on the current research agenda, by contrast has salutary effects on the various aspects of media use and is strongly related to learning from the media.

Critical essayists might make rather different kinds of sense out of our assertion that the administrative research agenda is concerned with a flawed and partly dysfunctional concept of credibility and ignores an institutional dimension of image, patterning, that seems to have more far reaching consequences. They might assert that the bottom line is circulation, audience ratings and advertising revenues and not the criterion of public awareness celebrated by democratic theory. Further, they might argue that enhancing levels of attention to news and learning from news content may well reduce the effectiveness of the surrounding advertising material.

Whatever the merits of the critical perspective, the non-administrative pluralist researcher might argue that the administrative agenda is simply too narrow even when judged against applied criteria. This is particularly relevant to the print media.

To the extent that positive evaluations of news quality are tied to a superficial satisfaction with surface content, newspapers trying to maximize audience assessments of credibility may in effect be fighting a synthetic war with television news for the same uncritical audience.

Consider, for a moment, what the industry's concern over credibility really is about. Typically the discussion is cast in terms of television versus newspapers. However, this supposed competition is somewhat superfluous, at least to the extent that both media are already presumably doing everything possible to maximize the accuracy, authoritativeness, quality and believability of their presentations. Given this artificial comparison, overt concern with credibility may be mostly a matter of image-building public relations. No matter what the research results show about this matter of credibility, however it is defined, it would appear that not much can be done in practice about enhancing credibility of the media products themselves. Those ranking the media high in quality would do so anyway, and efforts to woo more critical audiences are misplaced.

This may not be true of other image factors we have presented. Take, for example, the issue of seeing the news as patterned and forming a comprehensible picture of the world over time. This image of the media has received no systematic research attention either by administrative or academic researchers. Furthermore, effort to enhance the patterned and integrated character of media messages does not appear to be a major or even minor concern of media organizations. Consequently, we may assume that there is at least some room for real changes to be made in news products in response to this audience concern.

How can the news be constructed to make it more patterned and cumulatively meaningful? We offer several suggestions. The first and most obvious involves the arrangement, display and presentation of the kinds of stories the media already present. The perception of interrelatedness could perhaps be enhanced by grouping existing stories in a consistent, thematic manner that would allow readers to more easily see the logical connections between stories and to find the stories they are most interested in. Many newspapers are already making dramatic improvements in both indexing and display, but more can be done in terms of making the news compartmentalized and readily identifiable. For example, if a reader has a keen interest in following events in South Africa or a gubernatorial election, he or she may have to search almost the entire newspaper to be confident of finding all relevant stories.

A second possible content modification might involve the treatment of stories about similar topics over time. Perhaps efforts could be directed toward making stories of news events more explicitly connected by including more historical context, or tying similar events together over time. Another possibility would be to present advice about where additional information could be found to supplement the news. Not all readers will be interested in following up all stories, but many times news stories do pique readers'

interests, and some of our other evidence not presented here suggests that most readers seem relatively unsophisticated about where to go for additional information. It has long been suggested that an important function of mass media such as newspapers and television is to keep people abreast of new ideas -- but these media are not currently as sophisticated as they might be about helping people develop these newfound interests. Furthermore, media personnel presumably have greater than average sophistication as information seekers and so perhaps are best equipped to advise intersted members of the audience about the best and most reliable sources of additional information.

Another possible policy recommendation suggested by these findings is that the public apparently knows little about the organization, goals, motives and operations of the media generally and of journalism in particular. For at least some segments of the audience this lack of awareness is related to an image of the media as both being and representing special, rather than public, interests. This image of media products as representing special interests is also related to a perception of the news as fragmentary and disconnected.

Once substantive changes are made in any of these areas, they could be stressed in public information and advertising campaigns. In the long run, the pluralist argument holds that administrative goals might be at least as well served by concern about public enlightenment by improving news interpretation as by the narrow strategies of raising public perceptions about credibility.

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FIGURE 1 Current Events Knowledge by Media Image

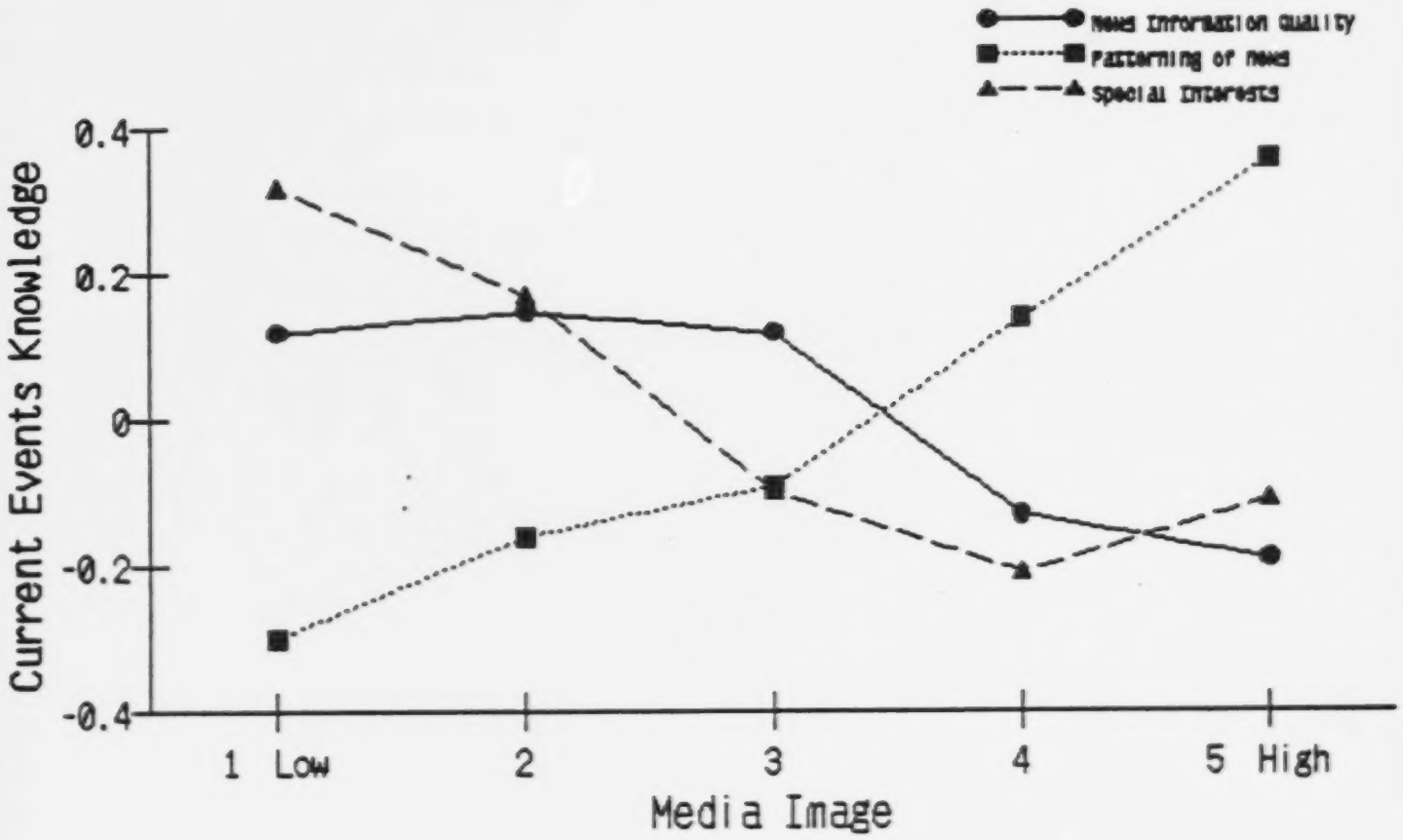

TABLE 1

Principal Components Analysis of News Media Images with Varimax Rotation

	News Quality I	Pattern-ing II	Negat. Content III	Depen-dency IV	Special Inter. V	Non-ess-ential VI	Item Mean
I. News Information Quality							
Present an accurate picture of the things they cover (17)	.73						3.35*
Information is thorough and complete (16)	.71						3.08*
Editorials well thought-out and in the public interest (15)	.58						3.39
Most reporters apply high ethical standards to their work (5)	.45	.44					3.59
II. Patterning of News							
Using a variety of sources gives you a diversity of views (9)		.72					3.81
Items fragmentary, but news forms meaningful patterns in long run (11)		.60					3.69
News media provide a service essential to democracy (2)		.58			-.39		4.06
News mostly unconnected events that don't add up to much (8)		-.46				.45	2.26
III. Negative Aspects of Content							
Many stories are dull and unexciting (18)			.72				3.00*
Reporters often exaggerate and sensationalize (14)			.69				3.29
Media focus too much on bad news (12)			.55				3.35
Many stories reflect biases of those producing them (13)			.53				3.27
IV. Dependency and Control							
People dependent on media, don't have independent check (10)				.63			3.26
News media exercise too much control over information (1)				.60	.42		3.50
News media saying pretty much the same thing (6)				.51			3.44
V. Special Interests							
Media often act as spokesman for the special interests (19)					.73		3.35*
Media often pursue own interests rather than public interest (3)					.46		3.15
VI. Media as Non-essential							
Can find out what's going on without using mass media (7)						.79	2.71
Many important stories never carried in the media (4)						.49	3.10
Common variance accounted for:	33.9%	17.4	14.6	12.3	11.3	10.5	=100.0%
Total variance accounted for:	17.7%	9.1	7.6	6.4	5.9	5.5	= 52.2%
Eigen values	3.37	1.73	1.45	1.22	1.21	1.05	

Note: Coefficients shown are factor loadings.

* = Question asked separately for Newspaper and television news. Mean is average of the two questions. N=511

TABLE 2

Association of Image Factors with Demographic and Political Variables: Correlations

Media Image Factors	Demographic Variables				Political Variables	
	(Male) Gender	Age	Income	Education	Efficacy	Trust
I. News Information Quality	-.03	.00	.05	-.15*	.11*	.29*
II. Patterning of News	.13*	.06	.16*	.15*	.23*	.14*
III. Negative Aspects of Content	.13*	.07	.02	.04	-.14*	-.12*
IV. Dependency and Control	-.02	.09*	.01	-.09*	-.12*	-.17*
V. Special Interests	-.05	.00	-.03	-.20*	-.10*	-.17*

N = 511 * = $p<.05$

TABLE 3

Prediction of Newspaper and Television Frequency of Use by Demographic Variables and Media Image Factors: Simple r, Final Betas and Incremental Variance

	Days Read Newspapers			Time with Television		
	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2
Demographic Variables						
Gender (male)	.07	.05		-.06	.00	
Age of Respondent	.24*	.27*		.16*	.13*	
Income	.19*	.13*		-.14*	-.09*	
Education	.09*	.11*	10.5*	-.27*	-.22*	9.4*
Media Image Factors						
I. News Information Quality	.10*	.12*		.12*	.09*	
II. Patterning of News	.16*	.10*		-.05	-.01	
III. Negative Aspects of Content	.01	-.03		-.05	-.05	
IV. Dependency and Control	-.06	-.08		-.04	-.07	
V. Special Interests	.02	.05	3.2*	.04	.00	1.5
			13.8*			10.9*

N = 511 * = $p<.05$

TABLE 4

Prediction of Reliance on Newspapers, Television, Newsmagazines and Friends and Family Ranked as News Sources by Demographic and Media Image Factors: Simple r, Final Betas and Incremental Variances

	Newspapers			Television		
	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2
Demographic Variables						
Gender (male)	.10*	.07		-.07	-.04	
Age of Respondent	.12*	.14*		.07	.05	
Income	.15*	.10*		-.07	-.05	
Education	.12*	.11*	5.5*	-.15*	-.10*	2.7*
Media Image Factors						
I. News Information Quality	.09*	.11*		.15*	.14*	
II. Patterning of News	.17*	.12*		-.05	-.02	
III. Negative Aspects of Content	-.01	-.03		-.02	-.01	
IV. Dependency and Control	-.06	-.07		.05	.04	
V. Special Interests	-.05	-.02	3.1*	.00	-.02	2.0
			8.6*			4.7*

	Newsmagazines			Friends and Family		
	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2
Demographic Variables						
Gender (male)	.09*	.07		-.08	-.07	
Age of Respondent	.14*	.17*		-.12*	-.15*	
Income	.08	.03		.07	.00	
Education	.15*	.12*	6.0*	-.12*	-.14*	4.2*
Media Image Factors						
I. News Information Quality	-.09*	-.07		-.10*	-.13*	
II. Patterning of News	.15*	.10*		-.15*	-.11*	
III. Negative Aspects of Content	-.05	-.08		.04	.06	
IV. Dependency and Control	.06	.05		-.05	-.05	
V. Special Interests	-.14*	-.11*	3.6*	.06	.03	3.6*
			9.6*			7.8*

N = 511 * = $p<.05$

TABLE 5

Prediction of Newspaper and Television Public Affairs Content Use and Soft News Reading and Entertainment Viewing by Demographic and Media Image Factors: Simple r, Final Betas and Incremental Variances

	Newspaper Public Affairs			Television Public Affairs		
	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2
Demographic Variables						
Gender (male)	.13*	.09*		-.05	-.04	
Age of Respondent	.16*	.19*		.16*	.17*	
Income	.20*	.12*		.01	.00	
Education	.18*	.18*	10.4*	-.02	.04	2.9*
Media Image Factors						
I. News Information Quality	.05	.08		.14*	.14*	
II. Patterning of News	.23*	.16*		.06	.07	
III. Negative Aspects of Content	-.03	-.07		-.02	-.03	
IV. Dependency and Control	-.05	-.05		-.02	-.03	
V. Special Interests	.07	.03	4.5*	.01	.02	2.6*
			14.9*			5.5*

	Newspaper Soft News			Television Entertainment		
	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2
Demographic Variables						
Gender (male)	-.03	-.03		-.06	-.03	
Age of Respondent	.00	.00		-.09*	-.11*	
Income	.05	.04		-.10*	-.06	
Education	-.04	.00	0.7	-.16*	-.15*	4.5*
Media Image Factors						
I. News Information Quality	.20*	.19*		.12*	.10*	
II. Patterning of News	.08	.08		-.03	.00	
III. Negative Aspects of Content	-.07	-.06		-.06	-.04	
IV. Dependency and Control	.00	.00		-.06	-.06	
V. Special Interests	.13*	.13*	6.2*	.05	.01	1.5
			6.9*			6.0*

N = 511 * = $p<.05$

TABLE 6

Prediction of Attention to Newspaper and Television Public Affairs Content by Demographic and Media Image Factors: Simple r, Final Betas and Incremental Variances

	Newspaper P.Aff. Attention			Television P.Aff. Attention		
	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2
Demographic Variables						
Gender (male)	.18*	.15*		.13*	.10*	
Age of Respondent	.10*	.14*		.12*	.15*	
Income	.19*	.11*		.13*	.05	
Education	.18*	.16*	9.7*	.18*	.17*	7.2*
Media Image Factors						
I. News Information Quality	.06	.08		.04	.06	
II. Patterning of News	.22*	.15*		.16*	.10*	
III. Negative Aspects of Content	-.01	-.05		-.01	-.04	
IV. Dependency and Control	-.03	-.03		.00	.00	
V. Special Interests	.04	.00	3.3*	-.07	-.03	1.7
			13.0*			9.0*

N = 511 * = $p<.05$

TABLE 7

Prediction of Media, Newspaper and Television News Evaluation by Demographic and Media Image Factors: Simple r, Final Betas and Incremental Variances

	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2
	Newspapers and Television News Combined		
Demographic variables			
Gender (male)	-.09*	-.09*	
Age of Respondent	.14*	.14*	
Income	.03	-.01	
Education	-.04	.00	2.2*
Media Image Factors			
I. News Information Quality	.37*	.37*	
II. Patterning of News	.22*	.22*	
III. Negative Aspects of Content	-.14*	-.14*	
IV. Dependency and Control	-.12*	-.14*	
V. Special Interests	-.05	-.06	22.2*
			24.4*
	Newspapers (TV News controlled)		
Television News Evaluation control	.60*	.54*	36.0*
Demographic variables			
Gender (male)	-.02	.00	
Age of Respondent	.05	-.04	
Income	.08	.02	
Education	.07	.11*	3.4*
Media Image Factors			
I. News Information Quality	.33*	.16*	
II. Patterning of News	.31*	.25*	
III. Negative Aspects of Content	-.11*	-.03	
IV. Dependency and Control	-.12*	-.05	
V. Special Interests	-.07	-.09*	8.5*
			47.9*
	Television News (Newspapers controlled)		
Newspaper Evaluation control	.60*	.57*	36.0*
Demographic variables			
Gender (male)	-.14*	-.08*	
Age of Respondent	.19*	.15*	
Income	-.01	-.02	
Education	-.15*	-.11*	6.3*
Media Image Factors			
I. News Information Quality	.34*	.14*	
II. Patterning of News	.08	-.07*	
III. Negative Aspects of Content	-.14*	-.08*	
IV. Dependency and Control	-.10*	-.06	
V. Special Interests	.01	.03	3.1*
			45.4*

N = 511 * = $p<.05$

TABLE 8

Prediction of Political Knowledge and Current Events Knowledge by Demographic, Political, Public Affairs Media Use, and Media Image Variables: Simple r, Final Betas and Incremental Variance

	Political Knowledge			Current Events Knowledge		
Antecedent Variable	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2	Simple r	Beta	Incr.R^2
Demographic						
Gender (male)	.20*	.12*		.29*	.17*	
Age	.18*	.15*		-.13*	-.15*	
Income	.24*	.10*		.21*	.06	
Education	.25*	.13*	17.4*	.40*	.21*	23.1*
Political						
Efficacy	.18*	.03		.19*	.10*	
Trust	.09*	.02	0.8	.01	-.07*	0.9*
Public Affairs Media Use & Attn.						
Newspaper	.35*	.24*		.32*	.24*	
Television	.16*	.03	4.5*	.07	.03	4.5*
Media Image						
News Information Quality	-.06	-.07		-.12*	-.09*	
Patterning of News	.25*	.12*		.23*	.12*	
Negative Aspects of Content	.06	.04		.09*	.08*	
Dependency and Control	-.02	.02		-.03	.00	
Special Interests	-.17*	-.12*	3.3*	-.17*	-.13*	3.9*
Interactions: Public Affairs Media X Media Image Factors			2.1*			0.6
			29.0*			33.0*

N = 511 * = $p<.05$